

K12, Higher Education Partner in Delaware to Reduce College Remediation Rates

More than half of Delaware public school graduates who enrolled in in-state colleges in 2012 were placed in remedial courses, according to [data](#) released by the Delaware Department of Education today. College remediation is a national problem, but one that higher education and K-12 officials are tackling together in Delaware.

Gov. Jack Markell and Secretary of Education Mark Murphy were joined by higher education leaders at Laurel High School this afternoon to share the data. They also visited students from a pilot math course, which aims to ensure students graduate ready to enter credit-bearing math courses in college.

“Students who require remedial classes in college increase their overall cost of attendance by taking classes that do not count toward graduation,” Markell said. “As college costs continue to rise, we must ensure our colleges and universities are partnering with our public schools to ensure students are focusing on courses that will help them graduate on time and prepare them for the workforce.”

Remedial courses are classes for students who are deemed not ready for college-level work. Students are placed in remedial courses based on scores on college placement tests and/or their SAT scores. Remedial courses do not provide credits toward a degree, but students still must pay tuition – or use financial aid – for them.

A U.S. Department of Education study found that less than half of students in remedial courses actually complete them with only 17 percent of remedial reading students and 27 percent of remedial math students completing their bachelor’s degrees.

“For our children to have the best chance to complete their degrees, we must ensure they are on the path to earning their degrees when they pay their first tuition bills. That means we must ensure they arrive at college prepared for that work,” Murphy said.

This fall three schools in the state – Brandywine School District’s Concord High School, Laurel School District’s Laurel High School and Woodbridge School District’s Woodbridge High School – are piloting the Foundations of College Math course, which was developed with the assistance of Delaware higher education professors. Delaware’s colleges and universities have guaranteed those students who successfully complete the course will not be required to take remedial math courses in college.

“The Foundations of College Math course is an example of the types of innovation that stem from partnership between K-12 and higher education institutions. We look forward to building upon this work and bridging the gap between high school and college for Delaware students,” said Shana Payne, director of the Department of Education’s Higher Education Office.

Delaware’s data also shows that remediation, like college enrollment, is an equity issue. Last year’s release of the [College Going Diagnostic](#) showed that only 27 percent of students from low-income backgrounds who were college-ready enrolled in college, with similar trends for black and Hispanic students.

The remediation data shows that even when those students enroll, they are facing higher remediation rates than their peers. Remediation rates are highest among students who are black, Hispanic and those who are English language learners and from low-income families and those with special needs. These high remediation rates translate into low college completion rates and increased college costs, which ultimately limit these students’ potential to succeed and contribute to

the state's economy.

The state has several efforts underway to address the problem. In addition to the Foundations of College Math course pilot, the state is working to increase access to and success in college-level courses in high school. More than 85 percent of Delaware graduates who scored a 3 or higher on the 5-point Advanced Placement exams were able to enroll in college-level courses when they entered Delaware public colleges in 2012. Only 31 percent of students who did not take AP courses were able to do so.

"By increasing access to AP classes – as well as International Baccalaureate and dual-enrollment courses – we can help more students avoid remediation," Murphy said.

Also key to better preparing students for college work are the Common Core State Standards, which the state adopted in 2010. Last year was the first year of full implementation across Delaware. The Common Core State Standards promote college readiness by establishing the skills every student should master by the time he or she graduates from high school. High-quality implementation of the Common Core State Standards will support Delaware students' abilities to enter college, complete degrees and succeed in careers.

The state also is encouraging Delaware's institutes of higher education to look to national best practices to curb remediation rates, such as using score ranges rather than a single cut score to place students in courses and aligning math courses with students' college majors.

The analysis released today provides breakdowns by the high schools from which students graduated and the Delaware colleges in which they enrolled. Find that information [here](#).